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Carol Potter

AND SHE WAS HAPPY

Sister has learned how to walk around dry eyed.
She's picked up the knack.
Here she comes across the field
on a swollen ankle. Sprained it
running too fast around a corner.
She goes down to the stream,
puts the ankle in the cold water.
She can hear the cows in the barn—
their wet voices pooling in the trees
around her; water with its tongue
at her ankle, that chilled bone,
and she's happy listening
to the spring breeze in some slightly
budded trees, enough green in them
to keep them from clicking.
She keeps her eyes open
and her mouth shut.
She's all business.
When the horse threw her,
knocked her out,
she woke up, saw the horse's
broad belly above her,
and she was happy.
Horse could have galloped home,
but stayed. She stood up,
looked into the horse's eyes,
saw herself upside down
and out of shape.
Certain she saw remorse
in the horse's brown eye,
she was happy, and the world
she thought was full of mercy.

She got up on the horse and rode home.
Told no one about her cracked
head, the blood on her shirt,
where so much happiness came from.